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Book Notices

SUMERIAN GRAMMAR AND CHRESTOMATHY¹

Dr. Langdon in the present work has collated and presented to the Sumeriological world a vast amount of philological material in an orderly and easily comprehensible form. Having long ago—in fact, almost at the beginning of his Sumeriological studies with me in the Columbia University Semitic Seminar—shaken off the chains of the “cryptogram” theory regarding Sumerian, he now makes the first attempt at a methodical exposition of the grammar of this ancient idiom, rightly emphasizing the absolute necessity of the signs (Preface, p. i), but, at the same time, not permitting himself to be bound by these signs, so as to allow them to obscure his excellent phonetic sense. Note his admirable treatise (§ 25, p. 26) on the proper phonetic use of the signs. In the inception of the science of Sumerian lexicography, nearly all scholars were too timid to depart from the sign proper and follow the lead of the syllable, so that the undoubted etymological connection between many kindred values, which are, however, represented by different signs, was overlooked. Thus, Langdon’s exposition of the modal significance of the internal vowels (p. 90), such as the connection between *gir* ‘travel’; *gar* ‘wagon’; and *gur* ‘run’; or between *sig* ‘high’ and *sag* ‘top, head’ (see below, this review on chap. vi), shows his complete emancipation from the Sumerian ideograms as mere phonetic guides. These ideograms he rightly regards as necessary from an epigraphic, rather than from a phonetic, point of view. In his Preface, he abstains wisely from any attempt to advance theories regarding the linguistic affinities of Sumerian, although he does leave the door partly open (Preface, p. ii) for the possible future acceptance of a theory that Sumerian may be connected with some known family of agglutinative languages. He states: “. . . as a negative result of my studies, I am convinced that it (Sumerian) has no affinity with either (?) the Caucasian, Aryan, or Semitic groups.” He advances no opinion as to Turko-Ugric or any other agglutinative group of tongues, recognizing at present “the futility of such efforts.”

The extent of Langdon’s work will prevent my taking up every point of importance to which he alludes, but I shall endeavor in the following criti-

¹ A SUMERIAN GRAMMAR AND CHRESTOMATHY WITH A VOCABULARY OF THE PRINCIPAL ROOTS IN SUMERIAN AND A LIST OF THE MOST IMPORTANT SYLLABIC AND VOWEL TRANSCRIPTIONS BY STEPHEN HENRY LANGDON, M.A., PH.D., SHILLITO READER OF ASSYRIOLOGY AND COMPARATIVE SEMITIC PHILOLOGY, OXFORD. Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1911; pp. i-vii: Title-Page and Abbreviations; i-ii: Preface; 1-177: Grammar; 179-200: Texts; 201-259: Vocabulary; 261-303: Sign-List; 305-308: Index; 309-310: Addenda; 311: Errata.

cism to dwell upon some of the most significant data presented in his grammatical chapters.

In chap. i: "Historical Outline," I cannot agree with him as to his derivation of the word Šu mer, written in Sumerian KI- I N- G I N (rather KI- E N- G I N), which he renders 'place of the faithful lord.' What deity is meant by this 'faithful lord'? In *MSL*, 206, I translated this name 'land of the reed'; viz., ki 'land' + gi(n) 'reed,' which may, indeed, have been a secondary paronomastic signification of the term, but I now believe that ki-en-gin is simply a phonetic reduplication of ki(n)-ki(n) = 'the lands *par excellence*.' The second ki(n) was probably changed to gi(n), owing to the preceding nasal n. Note that ki-en-gin alone = m â t u 'land,' Sa. i., 733 and er ci tu 'earth,' IV. R., 1, 22a. It is usual to find in primitive idioms the word for 'people' or 'men,' used as a generic term for the race of speakers. Thus, the Delaware Indians called themselves Le n â p e 'men,' and the San Blas Indians of the Isthmus of Panama call themselves t u l e 'people,' and, still more striking, the Passamaquoddies of Maine term their country simply 'our land.' What more natural, then, than to find the expression 'lands' in use by the primitive inhabitants of the Euphrates valley to denote their own territory?

As to the phonetic connection between Sem. Šu mer = Heb. שֹׁמֵר and and Sum. Ke ng in, I believe Langdon is right; i.e., that there is here a genuine phonetic equivalent; viz., the palatal k = š, perhaps ś (=palatal sh); the nasal nġ = the medial nasal m; and the final n = r. I am still doubtful as to the possibility of any connection between the expression e me - k u, the term for the harsher (Langdon: "the classical") Sumerian dialect and ki-en-gi(n); i.e., that e me - k u could be a reversal for ki (KU) - en - gi = KU - e me with nasalized m. I still see no reason for departing from my interpretation of e me - k u = 'language of the lords' or 'noble tongue' and e me - sal 'women's speech' or 'softer idiom' (*MSL*, xiv), regarding these expressions as merely metaphorical descriptions of the phonetics of the respective dialects. As to Langdon's assertion (p. 4, note 2), that if k u meant 'prince, lord,' we should then have to read e me - d u r, it is not certain that the value k u was not also used in the sense 'lord,' although d u r is the more common vocable. Note that, on p. 48, note 7, Langdon gives the following list of Sumerian dialects from Berlin Vocab., V.A.Th. 244 (*ZA*. IX, pp. 159-64): e me - sal, e me - g u d d a, e me - m u š (also e me - m u š a), e me - Te-NAD, e me - si - di and e me - g a l. Of these, I suggest that e me - g u d = li š â n u e l ū 'lofty speech' may well correspond with e m u - k u phonetically. Even the phonetic suggestion is here: k u = g u (d). Also e me - m u š = li š â n z i m i 'speech of adornment' may have been an equivalent for e me - sal 'the softer tongue,' while e me - si - di = li š â n m ê š a r i 'correct speech' and e me - g a l = li š â n u r a b ū 'great speech' suggest the same idea as that conveyed by e me - k u. As to e me - TE-NAD, I recognize

the doubtful character of the interpretation, but am inclined to derive it from *te* 'foundation, building' + NAD = *na* = *i ř š u* 'couch, bed'; viz., *te-na* might mean 'harem, women's apartments,' and hence *eme-te-na* could = *eme-sal*. These interpretations, if correct, still further strengthen the theory that *eme-ku* and *eme-sal* denoted idioms of the noble, and feminine, or softer, class respectively, which ideas were connected with the phonetic characteristics of the dialects in question.

Langdon is right in stating that *Šumer* and *Akkadû* respectively indicated the non-Semitic and Semitic languages of Babylonia (p. 2). He demonstrates this point satisfactorily in §§ 2 and 3.

Langdon's exposition of the Sumerian literary remains (pp. 5-18) is concise and full. He prudently makes no mention of the Nippur Library controversy. He sets the end of the vitality of Sumerian as a living literary vehicle at about 2000 B.C. (p. 18); but there can be little doubt that this idiom survived as a "church language" until a much later period.

In chap. ii, pp. 19-32, on the origin and principal characteristics of Sumerian writing, he describes the pictorial development of several signs of this graphic system (pp. 19-20). On p. 20, Langdon gives *balag* = *balaggu* "evidently a harp or lyre," and the archaic sign seems to agree with this rendering. Note, however that this sign with value *ba-lag* (ŠIT) has the two principal meanings *nabâcu* 'strike, smite' (*MSL*, 87 on Br. 7029, with value *du*b), and Meissner *Selt. Ideogr.*, 5042 = *cirxu* 'cry of woe,' probably with value *balag*. As Langdon states (p. 20, note 2), Jensen identifies this *balag* with Syr. *palgâ* 'drum.' It is significant to find in Meissner, *op. cit.*, 3112, the combination *bil*(NE)-*gi*=*carâxu* 'utter a woe-cry' and also, *op. cit.*, 3215, the fire-sign with value *bil-gi*=*carâxu*. Is this *bil-gi* the Sumerian word for 'fire,' or is it a paronomastic play on *balag*, whose primary meaning seems to be connected with lamentation? I am inclined to the latter view. It is possible that *balag* originally denoted any instrument which was struck, and then came to mean 'harp' specifically because lamentations were generally sung to this instrument: hence the equation *carâxu* 'utter a woe-cry.'

On p. 21, § 20, Langdon describes "gunification" (the better word in English would perhaps be "gunation"), the significance of which was brought to general attention by Fried. Delitzsch in his *Entstehung des ältesten Keilschriftsystems*, but Langdon does not mention Delitzsch at all in this connection. Under *ṭU*=*tu*n 'band, shekel,' Langdon might have called attention to the etymological connection between *gin*=*ṭU* 'shekel' and *gun*=*biltu* 'weight.' His paragraph 2, § 21, on "signs within signs" deserves special commendation. Note, however (§ 24), that in describing the sign for 'beget,' he alludes to the double *mu šen* - ideogram, stating that *mu šen*='fish.' *Mu šen* means 'bird' and has no connection with 'beget,' which is represented by the *xa*=fish-sign owing to the fancied resemblance of the fish to the *pudendum feminae*. This point is not brought out by Langdon.

In connection with *r a r* (p. 27), whose sign-name is *r a r û*, it is doubtful whether this final *-r* is not merely a conventional connecting consonant, inserted in order to enable the sign-name-ending *-û* to be appended. In other words, *r a r û* is probably only a name, and does not necessarily indicate that the *r a*-syllable had an original *r*-ending.

In §27, pp. 28-29, Langdon says: "it is natural to assume that a distinction existed in Sumerian" (i.e., between *s*-syllables and *š*-syllables). He then mentions, very properly the evident confusion between syllables of this character in early Semitic. The fact is that we know very little about the early pronunciation of these sibilant signs; thus, it is quite possible that *s a - t u* = *š a d û* 'mountain' may have been pronounced *š a t u* with *š*, although written with *s*. The confusion was, I think, twofold, and existed both in the pronounced and in the written word. In this connection should be noted the very apparent similar confusion, mentioned conscientiously by Langdon, between the simple and emphatic consonants; as between *k* and *q*. In his next chapter, §27, Langdon is forced to admit that syllables with *z* may contain a possible *ž*. If this is so, why not a similar probable confusion between *s* and *š*; viz., that *s*-syllables may contain a possible *š*, and *š*-syllables a possible *s*? He does not, however, admit this.

In §28, p. 30, he gives the value *u r*=*UR*, *LIK*, *TAŠ* 'dog,' but 'dog' is *l i k*, and not *u r*=primarily 'male'; *a m ê l u* 'man,' Br. 11256, through a confusion with *u r u* = *z i k a r u* 'male,' *MSL*, 353.

Very oddly, in his "practical hints," Langdon, alluding to the great number of roots of the same value, but with diversified meanings (§30), never once thinks of the apparently necessary theory of tonal differentiation, which I hold must have existed in Sumerian (*MSL*, xix and xxi). This seems to be the only method of accounting for this phenomenon.

Chap. iii (pp. 33-49) gives the discussion of "the phonetic elements of Sumerian and sound-changes." Here we find the interesting question as to the existence of *ü* (§§33 ff.), which was probably present in Sumerian, owing to the occurrence of *i*- and *e*- complements, and also owing to such variants as *di* and *du* for *DU*, which seem to presuppose an *ü*-pronunciation for *u*. I believe there may even have been a long *ü ü*=*Magyar ü*; note Langdon, p. 62, note 4, where he states that *ü* is sometimes written *u-e*. This probably indicated not *ü*, but *ü*.

It is not necessary to suppose that *ng* in *i n g a r* 'peasant' was palatalized *i n̄ a r*, as, if this were the case, how can the form *eg a r*, and particularly the Semitic derivative *i k k a r u*, be explained? Furthermore, there is no evidence of a nasalized *k* in Semitic. We should rather expect *i k - i a - r u*, had there been an original palatalization. In *d i n g i r*, *Eme-sal d i m e r*, with the Semitized *d i g i r û*, we have, no doubt, a real nasalization, because the medial *g* might represent the *ng* -nasal.

In §40, pp. 40-41, he gives some excellent examples of palatalization. Many of these are mere *B'gadh K'phath*, as *d i m - z e m*; *d u g - z i b*;

muten-mušen; nidaba-nisaba, etc. On the mutation nir-šer=etillu, cf. my remarks, *MSL*, xii, with the exposition of the precisely parallel change in the dialects of modern Chinese. This n=š change was one of the chief objects of ridicule on the part of the "cryptogram" school, who declared such a mutation to be phonetically impossible. Langdon seems to regard mm as equivalent both to ww and ñ, but these are not identical sounds. If m=w, which must have been the case, this w must have been pronounced somewhat like the modern Gaelic nasal m h = ñ w, in such a word as Gaelic l a m h, pronounced ũllá'ñ w. The probability is that m, mm and often ng, represented an indeterminate medial nasal sound of this character.

In Langdon's paragraph on vowel harmony, § 57, p. 46, he cites e d u for u d u 'sheep'; elal for alal 'water-bucket' (Prince), but these, especially the latter example, are rather vocalic dissimilations (*MSL*, xv); the same phenomenon seen in Finno-Ugric, wherever there occurs too long a series of monotonous vowel-harmonic combinations. Note also Sumerian d u - s u x u r and d a - s u x u r. In Sumerian, such dissimilation must have originated from some other cause than mere monotony, as the combinations seem too short to justify this hypothesis.

In chap. iv, on Determinatives (pp. 50-61), Langdon rightly believes that these prefixes are sometimes pronounced (p. 52), especially in such combinations as g i š - k a n and d u k - k a n =respectively 'bolt' and 'jar,' where it became necessary to make a distinction, in order to avoid confusion. His list of the most usual determinatives, § 67, pp. 52-61, is a useful one for the student of Sumerian. On p. 55, he cites a possible Semitic derivation of š a m =Assyr. š a m m u 'drug, poison' =Ar. سم, but I am inclined to believe that š a m is a real Sumerian word, to be connected etymologically with še 'grain'; cf. še - á m = the compound sign, Br. 4678, containing the combination še - a m; lit., 'it is grain, plant.'

In chap. v, on inflections and postfixes (pp. 62-90), why does Langdon regard m a - e, z a - e 'I, thou,' respectively, as writings for the values m ō, z ō? He must mean here m ō, z ō. If u - e may = ü (thus Langdon; in my opinion rather ũ), why may not a - e = ä or even ä = the prolonged ä?

According to Langdon, the *status rectus* has many endings which practically makes it only possible to recognize it by context. In contradistinction to this multiplicity of endings, he finds only one; viz., - a, to indicate the *status obliquus* = locative, instrumental, dative and temporal. Even this apparently oblique - a, however, he admits is used in the *status rectus* occasionally. While there can be little doubt that this - a is a true oblique case (cf. §§ 73-79), the occasional deviation from such a use would seem to indicate a loss of case-feeling, and that too at a not late period of the language (cf. *Gudea* Cyl., A, 13, 3). Such irregularities as m a n a, k a l a m a, d. n i n g i š z i d a, a m a, a m a - a, may perhaps be accounted for by supposing that vowel harmony exerted its influence in such cases (Langdon).

On the other hand, he admits that there may be other "unknown reasons." It is apparent that the last word has not yet been said on this difficult point.

It is curious to note that the instrumental is regularly formed by the postfix $\check{s}u=KU$ which reminds us of the instrumental ina in Assyrian. Note that $\check{s}u=KU=ina$, Br. 10563, an undoubted proof of the instrumental use of $\check{s}u=KU$. Note Langdon's §§ 83-93, all on $\check{s}u=KU$ and sometimes= $\check{S}U$, a very good exposition, in which he states that $\check{s}u$ has a preference for inanimates, while $-ra$ is used rather for animates and persons. This may be true, as there was an undoubted tendency in Sumerian to distinguish between animates and inanimates, as is the case in a number of modern primitive idioms such as the Algonquin, but I should like to see this distinction in Sumerian demonstrated at greater length than the compass of Langdon's work would permit.

Note in § 125 this interesting statement: "When the genitive has the force of describing the construct and is thus more logically connected with it, the construct ending ($-ge$) precedes the plural." The possibility of a postpositional insert before another termination was long ago brought forward by me in *Le Bouc Émissaire*, *JA*, 1903, p. 146, and contradicted by M. Chas. Fossey, *op. cit.*, note 1, in the running commentary on my article which he caused to be there inserted. I am glad to see that Dr. Langdon admits the possibility of a postposition preceding a final (cf. also my reply to Fossey, *AJSL*, XX, pp. 178-79).

On p. 83, note 1, Langdon rejects the connection of the plural $-me$ (discussed § 126) with $me=b a \check{s} \hat{u}$ 'to be.' Why? It is quite conceivable that $-me$, which could mean 'are' might have passed over into a plural ending. In several primitive idioms, we find the same plural finals used for both nouns and verbs. Thus, in Passamaquoddy (Algonquin), the $-ul$ (inanimate pl.) and $-uk$ (animate pl.) endings appear with both nouns and verbs. The fact is that the distinctions between the parts of speech are purely modern ones and are but little felt in any primitive tongue, particularly not in languages of the agglutinative type.

I note the pronunciation $xa-a$ for XI-A, the plural combination taken from Thompson, *Reports*, No. 103 obv. 11 (§ 128). This is, probably, correct (cf. $xa-a=XI$, Br. 8206).

Fossey, in *JA*, 1903, p. 144, note 2, in his commentary on my *Bouc Émissaire* says, contrary to my statement: "*On ne trouve pas d'harmonie vocalique dans les pluriels.*" But Langdon, § 129, gives three undoubted harmonic endings $e\check{s}$, $a\check{s}$, $u\check{s}$ as verb-plurals. This $-s$ -element, he adds, was attached to the def. pl. $-me$, giving rise to the new inflection $me\check{s}$. This plural, I believe, though usually written $MES\check{S}$, was probably pronounced harmonically $ma\check{s}$, $me\check{s}$, $mu\check{s}$. Indeed, in one passage, *JA*, 1903, p. 144, in the combination $a(ID)-dara-ma\check{s}$, I thought I had found a genuine harmonic writing $ma\check{s}$ for plural $me\check{s}$, to which, however, M. Fossey objected, perhaps justly, owing to paucity of examples. Langdon

does not believe in the etymological connection between the plural *meš* and the verbal *meš = šunu*. My remarks (just above on pl. -*me*) apply here with equal force.

As to the dual *áš - áš*, § 130, this *áš* must have been pronounced with a variant tone from the plural *aš*; a theory not followed by Langdon.

In § 131, the rule is laid down that, if the construct is *rectus*, the following genitive must be with -*ge*, while, if the construct is oblique, the genitive must be with -*ka*. Amiaud, *ZK*, I, p. 237, was the first to note this distinction between -*ge* and -*ka*. I believe that -*ge* and -*ka* are derivatives from a common original *g/k*-element connected with *gid = KID = Sem. kitû* 'woven cane mat'; i.e., = 'connected compactness,' an idea which would readily account for the use of this particle as a *nota genitivi* (cf. *MSL*, 131).

The curious use of the apparently genitive -*ge* to denote the subject of a sentence is commented on by Langdon (§ 140). This further confirms the view that -*ge = KIT* meant 'connection,' because a subject followed by -*ge* could only be construed to mean 'with respect to, in connection with such an one.' Note: *d.en-lil-lu-šag nu-eš-ge iliš ubani-ra in-na-an-sig* 'with respect to Enlillušag, the *major-domo*, he (Enlillušag) gave it to Ilubani.' Note that *nu-eš* is composed of *nu*, the same element as in *nu-banda*; *nu-gi-šar = the nomen opifex + eš = AB* 'house.'

In chap. vi, on nouns and adjectives (pp. 91-100), Langdon believes that the internal vowel gives a modal signification to the roots, citing a number of interesting examples; thus, (p. 92) *sig* 'be high' and *sag* 'top, head'; *sig* 'give' and *sag* 'gift.' Here he should have called attention to the probability of a tonal difference between these *sig*-roots. He cites also *gir* 'travel'; *gir* 'foot'; *gar* 'wagon' and *gur* 'run.' There is probably no connection other than a paronomastic one between Sum. *gur* and Sem. *garâru* (Heb. גָּרָר; Arab. جَرَسَ).

The connection between Sum. *a-du = t ê mu*, *milku* 'counsel' and *ad* = 'father' (thus, Langdon) is doubtful. I regard *a-du* as the abstract prefix *a + du = di = milku*. Note that *di-di = iqabbi* 'he speaks,' *MSL*, 75. Whether this *d(i, u)* was connected with *ad* 'father' is not certain. Observe that *ad* also = *um mu* 'mother,' on which cf. *MSL*, 17.

Langdon should have mentioned, in § 148, that noun-formation by vowel prefixes was first pointed out by Haupt (see *MSL*, xvii). The formative *ki-* prefix was explained in *MSL*, xvii.

Langdon's discussion of the *dug-KA* suffix, § 153, is interesting. In such compounds as *du mu - du g(KA)* 'offspring,' how does one know that this is not the genitive -*ka* = 'of or belonging to a child' = *du mu*; hence offspring? The element -*du* (p. 99) in compounds like *sim-du*

does not necessarily prove the *d u g*-pronunciation of KA, because this *d u* might be read *g i (n)* and represent the genitive *-g e*.

In chap. vii, on pronouns (pp. 101-14), Langdon is correct in stating that *m ê n* means merely 'to be' and has no personal force in itself. This fact was shown in *MSL*, xxxiv, § 70, and it was also demonstrated there that *m ê n* cannot specifically indicate 'I' or 'thou,' a point which was first brought forward by Haupt, Sfg. 30, nr. 2, 31. I cannot, however, agree with Langdon that the primary form of the first person is *m e*, and that *m a - e* is a representation of *m ö* (see above, this review on chap. v), because, if this were the case, we should expect to find *z e* or *z i - i* for the second person, whereas the sole second personal form is *z a - e*, except one sporadic *z i, si* (cf. § 157 and the single reference there cited).

In his treatise on the poss. *-m u*; oblique *-m a*, § 156, Langdon makes no allusion to the relative *-m u*, which may be used to denote any one of the three persons and which must have differed tonally from the *-m u* of the first person (*MSL*, xxi, § 3, and xxix). He states that *-m u -* in *k i - m u - t a = i t t i i a* (AL.³ 91, 27a) is incorrect. I cannot agree with him here, and it should be noted that so excellent an authority as Thureau-Dangin says that the oblique distinction for pronominal suffixes is often broken through (cf. Prince, *AJSL*, XXVII, pp. 328-30, note 4, on this entire discussion). Note also such forms as *z u - r a* (Langdon, p. 104, note 2) and *m u x - z u - š u* (KU), where we should expect Langdon's oblique *-z a*. He himself cites the theoretically oblique *-z a* in *status rectus*.

I am inclined to regard such forms as *en - ci - en*, § 158, and also *a b - ci - en*, *a n - ci - en*, *i b - ci - en*, *i n - ci - en = en - ci - en*, *m e - ci - en* as not yet clearly defined honorifics.

It is difficult to believe that the endings *ni - n a* and *bi - b a* are always used for animates and inanimates respectively (thus Langdon following Amiaud; see *MSL*, XII, and observe that Langdon himself gives as the animate *bi - e - n a d - di - en* 'he slumbers', but *bi* is inanimate according to him). If these are genuine animate and inanimate elements how do we account for the apparent reversal of the *n -* and *b -* elements in *a b â* 'who' (animate) and *a n â* 'what' (inanimate)? Cf. Prince, *AJSL*, XXIV, p. 355, where the theory is advanced that these suffixes represent the remote and near ideas respectively.

As to the emphatic *-r* in such phrases as (*dur*) *g i r - d u g - g a - r a = (a g a l u) l a s m u* 'a swift calf is he,' § 163, this is nothing but the dative *-r* used to round out the predicate in the same manner as we find the instrumental used in Slavic: *on je slovákom* 'he is a Slovyák.'

In his chap. viii, on numerals, pp. 115-23, I note that *a š* is given for 'one' and *a š š a* for 'six.' If this is correct, we must suppose again a tonal differentiation between these *a š*-values. Note that the horizontal wedge used for 'one' has both values *a š* and *d il*, and that the perpendicular wedge used for 'one' and 'sixty' has as its usual value *d i š - d il*.

In *MSL*, I give *diš* as the word for 'one.' Langdon states that *giš*, a value which may be assumed for the perpendicular, means 'sixty' and that *giš* was changed to *muš* and *uš*. He also gives *eš* (p. 119), but *eš* means 'three.' There is an undoubted confusion here which may perhaps be eliminated by again supposing tones. Langdon confirms me in the statement that the primitive Sumerians could not count beyond five (*MSL*, xxviii), as he correctly builds up their numerals for six, seven, eight, etc., by additions to *ia* 'five.'

Chap. ix (pp. 124-70) is his treatise on the verb. Beginning with the use of the simple verbal stem as both the infinitive and participle (§§ 180-81)—a usage which in some degree resembles the Arabic *ḥāl*-clause—Langdon proceeds, §182, to the description of the relation of the subject to the verbal notion. In his allusion to the suffixed conjugation, he states that it must have coexisted with the prefixed conjugation from the beginning, adding that the suffixed conjugation appears almost exclusively in dependent clauses in the evolution of the language. This suffixed conjugation was first discovered by Haupt, whom Langdon does not mention at all here. There can be no doubt of its dependent character in all the phases of the language as yet known to us, although there are occasional traces of it in independent sentences (§ 183).

On p. 132, § 186, Langdon correctly states that the prefixes are in no sense indicative of person or number, a fact which I believe was first pointed out in *MSL*, xxiv, § 13. It is equally true that these prefixes were not used at random, but possessed inflectional force (see Prince, *AJSL*, XXIV, pp. 354-65). I cannot agree with him entirely in his treatment of the force of the verbal prefixes, which must have been local in signification as well as subjective or objective. Langdon admits the local distinction (§ 163). Thus, he gives *e-* as indicating a subject near by; *mu-* = a subject near the center of action; *bi-* and *ni-* = a subject at a distance. I have given the meaning of these same prefixes as follows: *e* denotes final past action; *mu* = the relating past; *bi* refers to the nearer subject or object, and *ni* to the remoter subject or object (*AJSL*, XXIV, pp. 354-65). Langdon agrees with Thureau-Dangin only in part (p. 138). Langdon says: "the theory that a particle has in itself the power of denoting the direction of an action and the beautiful hypothesis of action from the center (*e*), and towards the center (*ba*), and from the center back to the interior (*ni*) is linguistically too mechanical." Yet he himself refers *mu* to the center of action and speaks of nearer and distant objects! As to the mechanical character of such distinctions, how about the common demonstratives in German, *dieser* and *jener*, or, to take a widely differing idiom, the difference in Turkish between the demonstratives *ol* and *bu*? The fact seems to be that the many prefixes and infixes in Sumerian have meanings indicating direction, purpose, means, and finality of action (Prince, *AJSL*, p. 355). An important future task of Sumeriologists must be to tabulate every verb-form in the inscrip-

tions with sufficient context, in order to correct or verify the results set forth by Thureau-Dangin and Langdon, both of whom have undoubtedly paved the way to a proper understanding of the Sumerian verb in all its varied and difficult ramifications.

Langdon treats compound verbs separately in §§ 203 ff. The Sumerians, like the modern Turks, were in the habit of combining with a verbal root some noun as a sort of cognate accusative, as *i gi - ga r* 'see'; lit., 'make eye'; *sa g - i la* 'elevate'; lit., 'lift head,' etc. The use of Sum. *ga r* 'make' in such compounds reminds us of the Turkish use of *etmek* 'make' in phrases like *imtiḥân etmek* 'examine'; *du'a etmek* 'pray,' etc. The difference between Turkish and Sumerian is that the former almost always uses a loan-word in connection with the native *etmek*. Such compounding is not so common in Finno-Ugric, as the Magyar prefers to make new verbs, following the German system, as *kiismerni* 'find out,' from *ki* 'out' + *ismer* 'know, perceive.' Finnish does much the same, as in *nimitää* 'name, call' (*nimi* = 'name,' probably from Swedish *namn*). In its compounds, Sumerian is much richer in the choice of the indicating verb, as we find not merely *ga r* 'make,' but *gi* 'turn,' as *ka - gi* 'revoke' = 'turn mouth'; *du r* 'dwell,' as *ki - du r* 'cause to dwell in a place,' etc. Langdon makes no linguistic comparisons.

I believe that *me* is always a real verb = 'to be.' Langdon states, § 207, that forms like *zi - me* 'thou art,' *mu - me* 'I am' militate against this, as we should rather expect the reverse *me - zu*, *me - mu* with the postpositive conjugation, if *me* were a genuine verb-root. He admits, however, that other verb-stems have the prefixed conjugation, so why not *me*?

"The suffix *ám* may be attached directly to a noun which forms its complement" (§ 208). This simply means that *ám*, an element of the verb *me* 'to be,' is a common predicate enclitic like Turkish *dyr*, *dir* 'is.'

His treatment, § 221, of the subjunctive *-a* is good. It has long been clear that this *-a* may indicate dependent clauses of any sort and Langdon admits this, § 223.

He is not too clear when he states: "the regular conjugations remained absolutely destitute of indication of person" (§ 225); meaning, of course, "personal differentiation." The fact is that where the personal pronoun is not indicated, the context is always so arranged as to avoid any misunderstanding. Whenever there is a possibility of doubt, the personal pronoun, or a subject, is expressed. There are many primitive languages which do not indicate personal differentiation by verbal conjugation and which follow precisely the same system.

In § 228, Langdon calls attention to the negative *ba ra -* (often *ba r - a n*). It is possible that this *ba ra* is nothing more than an abbreviated or defective writing for *ba ra n* with *n*, which *n* indicates the real negative. If, however, *ba ra* without *n* is a genuine negation, which may be

the case, how does he think the Sumerian speakers distinguished between this negative *b a r a* and the ordinary *b a - r a* 'he to him,' except by tones?

In chap. x, on conjunctions (pp. 171-75), he alludes to the suffix *- d a* of association; § 232. Attention was called to this in *MSL*, p. 68.

Again the tone-theory for Sumerian which he ignores is forced upon us in his chap. xi, on adverbs (pp. 176-77), where he mentions *m e* 'where, when.' How can he distinguish this from *m e* 'to be,' unless he admits the theory of tonal differentiation?

Three text selections are given (pp. 179-200) with very much too free translations for the ordinary student; viz., I. Cyl. A, i-vii (pp. 179-86); II. V. Rawl. 50-51 (pp. 187-96); III. from Radau, *Miscel.*, No. 2; C.B.M., 2193-11,403 (pp. 196-200).

Lack of space forbids more than a few comments on this interesting section. The author makes no explanation of *š a g*='meaning,' p. 180, l. 28. It may be assumed that this is *š a g = l i b b u* 'heart, mind,' but a beginner in Sumerian would be puzzled to arrive at this conclusion and it must be remembered that these texts are presumably intended for beginners. All through them we find excellent translations, but with few guiding comments. A student can hardly be expected to commit to memory even the chief peculiarities of so difficult a language as Sumerian, no matter how excellently they may be set forth in the grammatical section. It would have been better, if in this part at least, one comparatively easy text had been expounded, phrase by phrase, with careful references to the grammatical treatise.

Again on p. 180, l. 29: *d a g a l - m u m a - m u - m u g a - n a - t ú m*, he renders 'unto my mother my dream, verily I will report.' I find no explanation anywhere of *m a - m u* 'dream.' He adds, note 10: "*sic!* where we expect *d a g a l - m u - r a*"; but *- r a* would be redundant here, as the dative force is sufficiently expressed by *- n a -* (Prince, *AJSL*, XXIV, p. 360 B).

His selected vocabulary (pp. 201-259) and sign-list (pp. 261-303), excellent as they are for the advanced student, have the same fault. Thus the verb-form *í n - í l - í l*, p. 179, l. 8, for which the student would naturally look in the vocabulary under *í l*, is not noted at all. Under *í l i* 'be high' (p. 221), he does not mention the shorter form *í l*. On p. 181, l. 1, *e n s i* is not given at all. Similarly p. 181, l. 4, the expression *g i r n a m - m i - g u b* is rendered 'she embarked not.' It would be hard for a beginner to delve out that this literally means 'foot she set not' (in her boat). On p. 193, l. 14, *i a*, which he renders 'ointment' is not explained. He does give the value *i a* = NI in his sign-list, but does not state that NI means 'ointment,' nor does he indicate, on p. 193, which of the three possible *í a*-values occurs in l. 14 just cited. He omits also *š a g = m ê l ú* 'flood,' pp. 293-94 of the sign-list. Instances of this sort, which detract from the educational value of his work, might be multiplied.

It must not be thought from any of the above criticisms on a really monumental work, that I do not appreciate the great value to Sumeriological science of this talented author's effort to reduce a puzzling grammatical tangle to something like order. The difficulties with which the grammarian of Sumerian has to contend are very great, chiefly owing to the multiplex system of signs and values presented by the material at hand. Indeed, were there not such a wealth of signs, the task would be much easier. I have merely touched the surface of Dr. Langdon's work, picking out data here and there which impressed me, as I have studied it. To write a complete treatise on his results would be to indict a supplementary grammar almost as extensive as his own. I am in accord with him in all fundamental matters. He has demonstrated most ably the undoubted linguistic character of Sumerian and has completely banished the "cryptogram" theory from possible acceptance by all competent students of agglutinative phenomena. His admirable knowledge of agglutination—not always to be acquired by scholars whose mother-tongue is an inflectional language—is very impressive. He enters into the spirit of the phenomena like one to the manner born, and he has succeeded in presenting to the scientific world a pioneer work on this subject, which will undoubtedly be followed by others of a similar character, as our Sumerian material and acquaintance with the language increase.

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ARABIC EPIGRAPHY

During the last few years the study of Arabic epigraphy has made notable strides. The merit for this lies almost exclusively at the door of Max Van Berchem. If not the first to declare its value for the history of Mohammedan civilization, he has certainly been foremost in the exact study of the documents and in working out a comprehensive plan for their collection.¹ Since the year 1891 when he, for the first time, prepared such a plan, he has been indefatigable—not only in publishing the inscriptions himself, but also in securing the collaboration of other scholars and in inducing travelers to give these inscriptions their attention. The prosecution of this work in Mohammedan countries is the more necessary, in view of the frequent misuse of the materials of one building in the construction of others.

The present volume of the *Corpus*,² as projected by Van Berchem, the first part of which is the subject of this notice, deals with northern Syria,

¹ See *Journal Asiatique*, 1891, Tome XVII, p. 411; *ibid.*, "Lettre à M. Barbier de Meynard sur le projet d'un Corpus inscriptionum Arabicarum;" *Paris*, 1893, and the introduction to his edition of the inscriptions of Cairo.

² MÉMOIRES PUBLIÉS PAR LES MEMBRES DE L'INSTITUT FRANÇAIS D'ARCHÉOLOGIE ORIENTALE DU CAIRE. Tome Vingt-cinquième: Max Van Berchem, Matériaux pour un Corpus inscriptionum Arabicarum. Deuxième partie. SYRIE DU NORD, par Moritz Sobernheim. Premier fascicule, Le Caire, 1909. 4to, vii +139 pp.; 15 plates.